

MATT WAGNER

DYNAMITE 4

# THE Shadow

YEAR ONE



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MW

MATT WAGNER

**DYNAMITE** 

# *THE Shadow*

YEAR ONE



# THE *Shadow*<sup>®</sup>

## YEAR ONE

WRITTEN BY

MATT WAGNER

ART BY

WILFREDO TORRES

COLORS BY

BRENNAN WAGNER

LETTERS BY

SIMON BOWLAND

COVERS BY

MATT WAGNER (A)

ALEX ROSS (B)

CHRIS SAMNEE (C)

HOWARD CHAYKIN (D)

SPECIAL THANKS TO

JERRY BIRENZ, ANTHONY TOLLIN, AND MICHAEL USLAN

THE SHADOW CREATED BY

WALTER B. GIBSON

SEE THE LAST PAGE FOR ALL VARIANT COVERS

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Juan Colloredo, President / COO  
Rich Young, Director Business Development  
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Josh Green, Traffic Coordinator

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FORGET  
NICKY...

THERE'S  
A WHOLE LOTTA  
**KILLING** TO BE  
DONE!

IN OUR MANY  
YEARS TOGETHER...

HE'S ALWAYS ALLUDED  
TO THE **DANGERS** OF  
USING THE ABILITIES AT  
HIS COMMAND.

THE POWER TO CLOUD  
MEN'S MINDS CAN  
BECOME ADDICTIVE...  
AND CONSUMPTIVE.

ONLY HIS  
ACUTE MORAL FOCUS, HIS  
UNYIELDING DEDICATION  
TO **JUSTICE**...

...PREVENTS HIM  
FROM BECOMING  
A **MONSTER**.



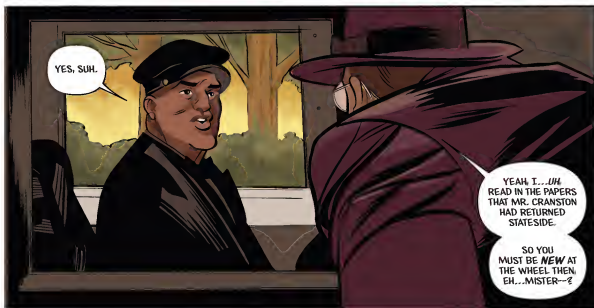


GEE FELLA,  
THANKS A BUNDLE!  
YOU CERTAINLY  
SAVED ME SOME  
SHOE LEATHER!

HA! GUESS I  
SHOULD GET THAT  
**SPARE** FIXED!



SAY, YOU MUST  
DRIVE FOR THAT BIG  
SPREAD JUST DOWN  
THE ROAD. WHAT IS IT,  
THE...**CRANSTON**  
ESTATE, RIGHT?



YES, SUH.

YEAH I...*UH*  
READ IN THE PAPERS  
THAT MR. CRANSTON  
HAD RETURNED  
STATESIDE.

SO YOU  
MUST BE **NEW** AT  
THE WHEEL THEN.  
EH...**MISTER**--?





OF COURSE, HE  
COULDN'T DO  
IT ALL ALONE.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, HE  
BEGAN GATHERING A NETWORK OF  
OPERATIVES. EACH WITH THEIR OWN  
SPECIAL FUNCTION TO HIS CAUSE.

MR. FELLOWS?  
IF YOU DON'T NEED  
ANYTHING ELSE, I'LL  
BE LEAVING NOW.

THAT'S  
FINE,  
BETTY.

I'VE JUST GOT A  
FEW MORE THINGS  
TO FINISH UP. SEE  
YOU TOMORROW.

SIGH

YOU'D  
THINK PEOPLE WOULD  
REALIZE THAT INSURANCE  
COMPANIES ARE *ON TO*  
THESE BOGUS CLAIMS  
BY THIS POINT.

CLAUDE  
FELLOWS...

PETTY SCAMS  
AND INDEMNITY FRAUD ARE  
BUT SURFACE RIPPLES...  
IN THE DEEP DARK ABYSS  
OF *CRIME!*

I...  
*WONDERED*  
IF AND WHEN I  
MIGHT SEE YOU  
AGAIN.

IN TIME, *MANY* WOULD  
ANSWER THE SUMMONS.



FEW ARE  
THOSE WHO SEE  
ME TWICE.

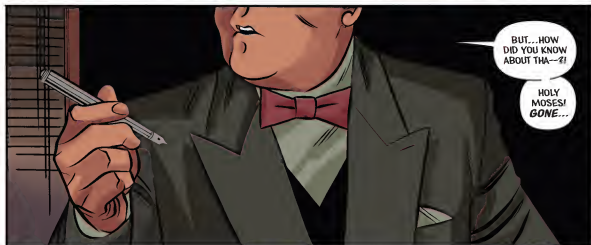
FEWER STILL ARE  
THOSE WHO LIVE TO TELL  
THE TALE. **I** AM THE WEAPON  
OF JUSTICE...AND I **HUNT  
DOWN** THE WICKED AND THE  
CRUEL, THOSE WHO HARVEST  
CRIME'S BITTER FRUIT. LIKE  
YOUR ABDUCTERS, FOR  
INSTANCE...

SERVING AN UNKNOWN  
MASTER WHO SEEMED  
TO BE BUT A LIVING  
SHARD OF DARKNESS.

YES, I...CAN  
NEVER THANK YOU  
ENOUGH FOR SAVING  
ME. I-I OWE YOU  
MY LIFE.

IN RETURN, I ASK  
FOR YOUR SERVICE  
AND YOUR LOYALTY...  
AS AN AGENT OF  
MY CRUSADE.

WILL  
YOU HONOR THAT  
DEBT...ARE YOU  
**WITH ME?**





THIS AIN'T  
GOOD, JOE.

WHATTAYA MEAN?  
THEY **MISS**  
DIDN'T THEY?

GODDAMN  
PANSIES!



YEAH...**THIS**  
TIME THEY **MISS**. BUT  
THEY KNOW WHERE TO  
**FIND** YOU. **EVERYONE**  
KNOWS THIS IS YOUR  
MAIN OFFICE!

WE CAN LEAVE  
A SECURITY CREW  
HERE...MAKE SURE THEY  
DON'T BURN DOWN THE  
WHOLE BUILDING. BUT  
**YOU** HAVE GOTTA  
RELOCATE!



IT AIN'T **ME** THAT  
OUGHTTA BE RUNNIN'  
SCARED! IT'S THOSE  
**OTHER** PRICKS!  
LUPPINO! BIANCHI!  
COLOMBO! VALENTI!  
GENOVESE!

JOE...FOR  
WHATEVER REASON, **YOU**  
STARTED THIS WAR. THE  
OTHER DONS ARE GONNA  
FIGHT BACK...LAW OF  
THE FREAKIN' JUNGLE.  
Y'KNOW?



**BASTARDS!** LET 'EM TRY!  
I'M GONNA SEE **EVERY ONE** OF  
'EM DEAD! GONNA DANCE ON THEIR  
GODDAMN **GRAVES!** THERE'S  
GONNA BE **RIVERS** OF THEIR  
STINKIN', PUTRID BLOOD!

S-SURE,  
JOE. WHATEVER  
YOU SAY. UH...  
LET'S GO.











CHRIST!  
WHATTA  
MESS!

NINE DEAD...IN A FREAKIN'  
**TNT** ATTACK! I MEAN, I GOT NO  
PROBLEM WITH THESE DAMN  
MOBSTERS KNOCKIN' **EACH OTHER**  
OFF. BUT WHEN IT SPILLS OVER  
ON THE CIVILIANS...

SURE  
IS CRAZY,  
INSPECTOR.



I MEAN, **WHAT**  
HAPPENED? WHAT  
CRANKED UP ALL  
THIS RUCKUS?

I DUNNO...BUT  
THE COMMISSIONER'S  
DANCING HIS LITTLE  
POLITICAL POLKA AND  
THE MAYOR'S UP TO HIS  
EYEBALLS IN BANK  
REFORM!

THIS IS  
GONNA GET  
UGLY!

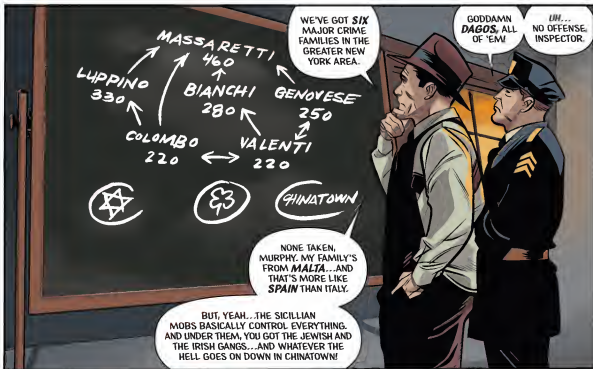



'SCUSE, SIR.  
IS OKAY? I SWEEP  
UP IN OFFICE?

YEAH SURE,  
UH...**"FRITZ"**,  
RIGHT? KNOCK  
YOURSELF OUT.



IT'S BEEN **YEARS** SINCE WE  
SAW THIS LEVEL OF CONFLICT WITHIN THE  
MOBBS. NOT SINCE THE EARLY DAYS OF  
PROHIBITION...WHEN THE HIERARCHY  
OF POWER WAS BEING SETTLED.






OF COURSE, I HAD  
NO IDEA EXACTLY WHAT  
I WAS GETTING INTO.

I'M AFRAID I DON'T  
QUITE UNDERSTAND.  
I'VE MOVED IN AT  
THE ESTATE BUT YOU  
**DON'T WANT--**



YOUR  
COURTESAN DAYS  
ARE OVER, MISS  
LANE.

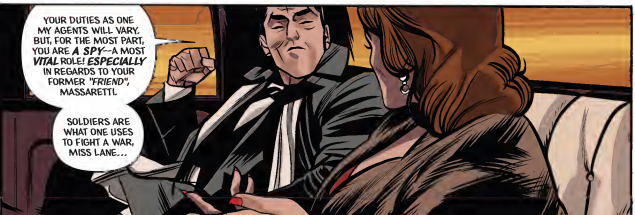
I INTEND TO  
PUT YOU TO USE  
IN AN ENTIRELY  
**DIFFERENT**  
FASHION.



THERE IS A FESTERING  
PRESENCE IN THIS CITY...ONE  
THAT I INTEND TO LOCATE AND  
**STAMP OUT!** THIS TERROR IS  
**BEYOND** THE ABILITY OF  
THE POLICE TO COMBAT.

WE ARE AT  
**WAR**, YOU SEE...  
AND **CRIME** IS  
THE ENEMY.

ALRIGHT  
THEN. IF I'M NOT  
YOUR BEDMATE...  
WHAT **IS** EXPECTED  
OF ME?



YOUR DUTIES AS ONE  
MY AGENTS WILL VARY.  
BUT, FOR THE MOST PART,  
YOU ARE A **SPY**--A MOST  
**VITAL** ROLE! **ESPECIALLY**  
IN REGARDS TO YOUR  
FORMER "FRIEND",  
MASSARETTI.

SOLDIERS ARE  
WHAT ONE USES  
TO FIGHT A WAR,  
MISS LANE...



...BUT **SPIES**  
ARE HOW THAT  
WAR IS WON!

IN THE MEANTIME,  
SPIES MUST STAY HIDDEN...  
AND YOUR PRESENCE AT MY  
SIDE ADDS ANOTHER LAYER  
TO OUR MASQUERADE.  
SO **SMILE...**



...AND LET'S  
SEE SOME OF THAT  
WELL-PRACTICED  
CHARM!

HOW **COULD** I  
HAVE TRULY KNOWN?

THIS COLD AND DISTANT  
MAN, WHO CONSIDERED  
HIMSELF THE ANNOINTED  
SCOURGE OF ALL VIOLENT  
CRIME, AND WHOSE TRUE  
IDENTITY WAS SHROUD IN  
INTRIGUE AND MYSTERY.

THIS MAN...WHOSE  
**TRUEST** NAME  
PROBABLY WAS  
"**THE SHADOW.**"

IN MANY WAYS,  
HE SCARED ME  
MORE THAN **ANY**  
GANGSTER.

AND YET, I FELT  
INEXORABLY DRAWN  
TO HIS DARK AND  
DEADLY ALLURE.





ALRIGHT THEN...  
WHAT IS IT THAT  
DRAWS THE EMINENT  
MR. CRANSTON TO *THIS*  
BUILDING NIGHT  
AFTER NIGHT?

HAS HE GOT A  
PHONY OFFICE SET-UP?  
IS HE IN WITH BOOT-  
LEGGERS? SOMETHING  
ABOUT THIS GUY...JUST  
**DOESN'T** ADD UP!



HUNT  
CHURILLH  
S B T  
FEISTER  
T E M  
EMERY  
R J  
JONAE  
K M  
MCQUIRE  
J THOMAS  
DK M  
LAMING  
M LAMNEE  
C C  
CLARK  
D B  
FORMUNT

NO SOLICITORS

I MEAN, *MOST* OF  
THESE SEEM LIKE WELL-  
ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES...  
BUT NOTHING FANCY. LOOKS  
LIKE THEY'VE BEEN HERE  
FOR **YEARS!**

GUESS  
THERE'S ONLY  
**ONE** WAY TO  
CHECK 'EM  
ALL OUT...



~GROOOAN~

BUT DID IT  
HAVE BE A SIX  
STORY WALK-  
UP?!





HMMM...WELL,  
ASIDE FROM THE BASEMENT—  
WHICH IS LOCKED UP TIGHT AS  
A PHAROAH'S TOMB--**THIS** IS  
THE ONLY SPACE THAT DOESN'T  
SHOW ANY ACTIVITY.



OKAY,  
BOYO--LET'S SEE  
IF YOUR TEENAGE  
FASCINATION WITH  
MAGIC TRICKS AND  
ESCAPE ARTISTRY  
WILL PAY OFF  
HERE...



AH, **NUTS!**  
TOO TOUGH FOR  
MY SKILLS!

HMM...WONDER  
HOW ONE GOES  
ABOUT HIRING A SAFE-  
CRACKER? CAN'T  
JUST LIST IT IN THE  
CLASSIFIEDS...



C'MON,  
CRANSTON...WHAT  
ARE YOU **HIDING**  
IN THERE?



MARONE! I AIN'T HADDA HOLE UP IN CRUMMY JOINTS LIKE THIS SINCE I WAS BUMPIN' FLOOZIES THREE AT A TIME EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT!

JEEZUS... EVEN THE DUST IS CRAWLIN'!

BOSS... I KNOW THIS AIN'T UP TO YOUR *USUAL* STANDARDS.



BUT WE GOT NO CHOICE. WELL, CHRIST... *YOU* SAW! MASSARETTI'S PLAYIN' FOR KEEPS SO WE GOTTA KEEP YOU MOVIN'.

MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER... I HEAR *HE'S* IN THE SAME BOAT!



MAKES ME FEEL ANY BETTER?! THAT *SUCCHIACAZZI* 'IN THE SAME BOAT' AS ME?!

THERE AIN'T NOTH— ISN'T ANYTHING THAT'LL MAKE ME FEEL *BETTER* UNTIL THAT SONUVABITCH IS TOSSED *OUTTA* THE BOAT AND *DROWNS* LIKE A SQUIRMING RAT!



AMEN TO THAT, CARLO— EH?!

WHAT THE HELL—?!



YOU ARE A  
COWARD AND  
A FOOL, CARLO  
LUPPINO.

EVEN RATS DON'T  
KILL THEIR OWN KIND.  
ONLY THE EVIL HEARTS  
OF *MEN* CONSPIRE TO  
USURP AND DESTROY  
EACH OTHER!



THAT  
LAUGH...?!  
*IT'S YOU!*

YOU'RE THE  
BASTARD WHO  
SAUCED MY  
GUYS AT THE  
ICE HOUSE!

UH...  
WHAT THE HELL  
DOES "USURP"  
MEAN?



*WHY* DOES  
GIUSEPPE MASSARETTI  
WAGE WAR AGAINST THE  
OTHER MOBS?

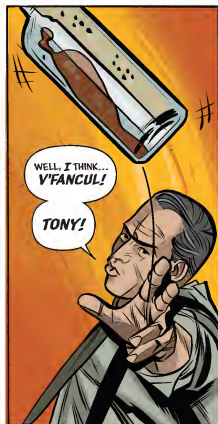
WHAT DOES HE  
HOPE TO *GAIN*  
FROM SUCH A  
CONFLICT?



IF I KNEW...YOU  
THINK I'D BE HIDING  
OUT LIKE THIS?

HELL, IF I THOUGHT IT WAS  
A POWER GRAB, I'D SIDE UP WITH THE  
PRICK AND TAKE A PIECE FOR MYSELF!  
BUT HE'S FREAKIN' *CRAZY*...  
ATTACKING *EVERYONE*!

THAT JUST  
*AIN'T* GOOD FOR  
BUSINESS!









YOU COULD  
SAAAY THAT.

BEGIN  
DISROBING.

WAY AHEAD  
O' YOLL DOC.  
Y'SEE...**HE** SENT  
ME CAUSE **I'M**  
THE CREAM OF  
THE CROP!



IS THAT SO?  
AND HOW HAVE YOU  
ACHIEVED SUCH A...  
SPECIAL STAAATUS?



LET'S JUST SAY...  
I **KNOW** HOW IT WORKS.  
HOW **EVERYTHING** WORKS!  
I'LL MAKE YA SEE STARS  
AND THEN I'LL BLOW OUT  
THE MATCH!

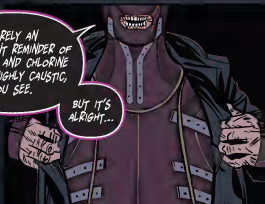
SAY, UH...  
WHAT'S THE DEAL  
WITH YOUR  
**VOICE?**



OH,  
NOTHING...

MERELY AN  
UNPLEASANT REMINDER OF  
MUSTARD AND CHLORINE  
GASES. HIGHLY CAUSTIC,  
YOU SEE.

BUT IT'S  
ALRIGHT...







WE'RE  
THROUGH  
TALKING!

WHA--?!  
OH-MY-GOD!

CRASH!!

# DYNAMITE®

## IN THE NEWS - JULY 2013

THE ART OF SEAN PHILLIPS HARDCOVER CELEBRATES THE CAREER OF FAN-FAVORITE FATALE AND CRIMINAL ARTIST



Dynamite Entertainment is proud to announce the October 2013 release of *THE ART OF SEAN PHILLIPS* by co-writers Sean Phillips and Eddie Robson, a career-spanning hardcover retrospective of the acclaimed Criminal and Fatale artist, including over 350 pieces of artwork, 70 never-before-seen illustrations, and exclusive interviews with the artist and his peers.

For *THE ART OF SEAN PHILLIPS*, the artist has personally selected the very best, most interesting examples of his art for inclusion, from comic strips assembled with childhood friends in his bedroom, through his work for British girls' comics and 2000AD, to his role as a key artist in the early years of Vertigo, through his superhero work for Marvel, DC, and WildStorm, and finally from his multiple creator-owned series with collaborator Ed Brubaker. Also, this lavish 312-page hardcover features extensive dialogues with Phillips himself, as well as contemporaries Ed Brubaker, Warren Ellis, Karen Berger, Jamie Delano, Dean Motter, Eddie Campbell, Axel Alonso, Joe Casey, Dave Gibbons, and many more.

"Putting this book together has been a welcome reminder that I might not have wasted my life drawing comics," jokes Phillips.

To discuss this and more, log onto the Dynamite forums at [WWW.DYNAMITE.COM/BOARDS](http://WWW.DYNAMITE.COM/BOARDS)

"Looking back, I see that I've managed a wide variety of work in a range of genres that I might not have been that comfortable with drawing beforehand. That I can still bear to look at some of this work means that it's a lot better than I thought it was at the time that I drew it. It's never as good on paper as it was in my head, but seeing the highlights brought together in a proper hardcover retrospective makes me think that maybe I've got the hang of this comics stuff after all."

Eddie Robson, who co-writes the book with Sean Phillips, says, "You've got a selection of his best work, mixed in with stuff that's never been seen before, and stuff that really shows off his process and his evolution as an artist. It's a lovely object, so well-designed, and seeing all the material outside a narrative context gives you a fresh appreciation of Sean's work. But we were keen for there to be value in the text too, so it's 60,000 words, which would comfortably fill a 200-page paperback on its own. It's not just a few bits of puff to fill in the spaces around the artwork; it's a full and frank account of Sean's career from the beginning to the present day. It's really enlightened me regarding Sean's work and the craft of a modern comics artist generally, and thanks to all our contributors, I'm sure it'll do the same for everyone who reads it."

Nick Barrucci, CEO and Publisher of Dynamite, expressed his enthusiasm for the project. "Sean Phillips is one of the industry's top talents - a true visionary whose artistic prowess conveys such incredible depth and drama, you can't help but be drawn into his storytelling. I leapt at the chance to get this book published, and his involvement through every step of the process has been both invaluable and a pleasure. We couldn't be happier to place his retrospective on our bookshelf alongside our successful Alex Ross, Howard Chaykin, and John Cassaday art books. Now it's time to add the beautiful Sean Phillips hardcover."

*THE ART OF SEAN PHILLIPS* is solicited in the Diamond July Previews catalog for release in October.

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[www.facebook.com/dynamitecomics](http://www.facebook.com/dynamitecomics)

NEXT ISSUE:



### ISSUE #5

The Shadow pursues his crusade against crime, and Margo Lane struggles to fit into Lamont Cranston's mysterious world. Meanwhile, Big Gun Masseretti's senseless gang war disrupts the mobs of New York, prompting a daring heist that draws the Master of Men like a moth to flame. And finally, an intrepid reporter relentlessly pursues The Shadow's secrets, closing in!

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## FEATURED REVIEWS

### BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #1

(GEEKS OF DOOM):

"BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #1 proves the theory that if you want the best, you get the best. In this case, if you have a tremendous popular science fiction franchise with a huge cast, you call DnA (Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning) to write your book. Any fan of the television show is going to love this book. Anyone who's never seen or been interested in the television show, will definitely be entertained. Pick this book up now!"

### BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #1

(Major Spoiler):

"BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #1 filled a campy, space-opera-sized hole in my heart."

### GRIMM #1

(Bloody Disgusting):

"The art is simply great. I like the realistic imagery, especially with regards to the

Wesen, there is a big diversity of creatures and they look unique and interesting. The violence is unsuspected and well done. The colours are not overly dark or soft, and they offer a good representation of daily life."

### GRIMM #1

(Major Spoiler):

"Bottom line: this issue is one of the best adaptations of a TV series ever. The pacing is quick and deliberate, much like the series. The art has a very dark feel, much like the show, which often has much of the action taking place at night. On all the things that concern me — likenesses, up-to-date storylines, being true to the show on nearly every level... I was impressed by GRIMM #1. I'm anxiously awaiting the next issue."

### GARTH ENNIS' RED TEAM #3

(Comic Book Therapy):

"It's an incredibly intriguing crime drama

being told alongside some great art. Cermak's art is brilliant as always."

### BLACK BAT #2

(Comic Book Therapy):

"Buccellato has found a great angle for Black Bat's new origins. He's a character that could do well with a modern twist, and so far Buccellato has succeeded. There is still a lot of mystery as to the character and the larger story, but it's still early days. At least it's a fun ride!"

### SHADOW: YEAR ONE #3

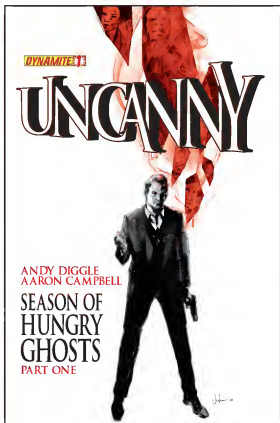
(Comic Book Bin):

"Issue #3 is about bad guys, the kind of fictional violent, remorseless killers that deserve to have the sword of justice brought down on them. Thank goodness that Matt Wagner finally, really unleashes The Shadow's pistols."

# DYNAMITE®

## IN STORES NOW! UNCANNY #1

WRITER ANDY DIGGLE TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW BOOK *UNCANNY*, CRIME IN COMICS, AND MORE! ORIGINALLY POSTED ON [COSMICBOOKNEWS.COM](http://COSMICBOOKNEWS.COM)



Byron Brewer, Managing Editor of Cosmic Book News:

It is a fact that lovers of cosmic comics are also usually lovers of crime drama, and for many of us it is the 1940s Bogie style we love: gritty, street smart and violent.

A market in comics is growing for crime mystery, and a new offering to this is Dynamite Comics' *Uncanny* by writer Andy Diggle (*Hellblazer*, *Daredevil*, *The Losers*) and artist Aaron Campbell (*Sherlock Holmes*, *The Shadow*).

To get to the bottom of this noir concoction, Cosmic Book News Managing Editor Byron Brewer exclusively got a booth in the back at Lefty's and had a discussion with Diggle.

**Cosmic Book News:** Andy, how did this project in Dynamite's new Crime Line come about?

**Andy Diggle:** It was pretty simple -- they asked! I've enjoyed writing genre books like *The Losers*, *Rat Catcher*, *Six Guns* and *Green Arrow: Year One* (which I approached as an action thriller rather than a superhero comic), and I guess it shows.

**CBN:** The thrillers you mention, like *The Losers* and *Rat Catcher*, had a great feel and were well received. Can you compare *Uncanny* with those works?

**Andy Diggle:** *The Losers* was heavy on the action whereas *Rat Catcher* was more of a procedural -- although it did have the requisite amount of gunfights and exploding helicopters! *Uncanny* is somewhere in between -- gritty noir in tone, with a balance of action and drama. The difference is that *Uncanny* also has this slight supernatural undercurrent which allows me to zig-zag off in unexpected directions.

**CBN:** Tell us about *Uncanny*'s character Weaver.

**Andy Diggle:** He's a professional gambler, con-man and thief for hire. On the surface he seems to have it all -- looks, skill, confidence, swagger -- but we quickly learn that it's all just a front. His amazing jack-of-all-trades skills are not really his own -- he has this ability to steal other people's knowledge, abilities and expertise for a limited time, and use them to execute his plan. But the clock's always ticking. He has to complete his mission before the stolen skills fade and he goes back to being a regular Joe. He lives this completely disposable lifestyle, always moving, but there's no safety net under him. He's hollow inside. We join him at a point in his life where he's forced to confront these aspects of himself that maybe aren't so pretty.

**CBN:** Are there any special foes he faces? Is he the only one with paranormal powers in the stories?

**Andy Diggle:** He thinks he's unique, but he quickly learns that there are other people out there with abilities even weirder than his own. He's never really questioned where he got this power from -- he figures, "Don't mess with a winning streak." It's only once he starts losing that he's forced to start finding out the truth about his own origins.

**CBN:** What can we expect from *Uncanny* as it goes forward?

**Andy Diggle:** After a run of bad luck, Weaver finds himself in a corner and takes a job that will lead him to team up with other players with uncanny abilities, who are trying to find the source of their own powers. Cue action, intrigue, heists, betrayals, sex and violence. All the good stuff, in other words.

**CBN:** Do you have any certain inspirations for your crime writing? Was there a particular work that inspired *Uncanny*?

**Andy Diggle:** My aspirations are simply to entertain with a brain. I love genre comics and movies, and I hate it when they say, "Leave your brain at the door." I like my brain where it is, y'know? I try to spin an entertaining yarn that doesn't insult the intelligence of the reader.

**CBN:** What about the art of Aaron Campbell? Did you see his work on *The Shadow*?

**Andy Diggle:** I did, and it was great. He's the perfect choice for this kind of book -- his line work has all the grit and shadow you want for a noir book, but the action choreography is still crisp and clear. It's the perfect combination.

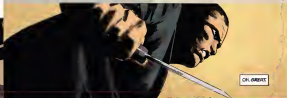
**CBN:** Do think there is a strong place for crime drama in the comics market?

**Andy Diggle:** There does seem to be. I think books like *100 Bullets*, *Criminal* and the underrated *Stray Bullets* really kicked the doors open and showed comics fans there's more for them than just the monthly corporate spandex grind. Crime is hugely popular in film, TV and literature, and there's no reason that shouldn't be true of comics too.

**CBN:** Any current or future projects you would like to mention?

**Andy Diggle:** I'm having a blast writing *Thief of Thieves* with Robert Kirkman at Image, and *Doctor Who* at IDW. I'm also lining up a couple of new projects that I can't talk about yet, including a possible second crime book at Dynamite. It's fun being able to play the field.

**Cosmic Book News** would like to thank Andy Diggle for taking time out of his busy schedule to answer our questions, and we also thank Dynamite's own Nick Barrucci and Josh Green who helped make this interview possible.



# KINGS WATCH



SUPERSTAR WRITER **JEFF PARKER**  
AND ACCLAIMED ARTIST **MARC LAMING**  
DELIVER THE EARTH-CRUSHING EVENT OF 2013

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# THE PHANTOM • FLASH GORDON • MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN

WHAT ARE THREE MEN WILLING TO SACRIFICE TO SAVE US ALL?

## AN INTERVIEW WITH KINGS WATCH WRITER JEFF PARKER

**Who are the members of KINGS WATCH, and what do each of these characters contribute to the group?**

It's the Trinity of King Features: Flash Gordon, Mandrake the Magician, and The Phantom. As well as some of their individual supporting casts. We find that the big three complement each other very well in dealing with the menaces unleashed in Kings Watch. Mandrake has arcane knowledge that lesser mortals would go insane being aware of, and he influences perception. The Phantom is a master of combat and fairly ruthless. Flash is the idealistic hero to whom odds mean nothing.

**What most excites you about working on the KINGS WATCH project?**

I've had an idea for Flash's character in the back of my head for a long time, and this story lets me introduce him that way. They're some of the biggest icons of pulp heroic fiction, and so many characters are influenced by them.

But most directly I'm very excited to work with Marc Laming. Every time new pages roll in from him, I have to show them to my studio mates, they're gorgeous. His art has the timeless quality that fits this like a glove. I'm very happy editor Nate Cosby paired us together; this book is coming to life.

**Mandrake the Magician makes his return in KINGS WATCH. What are your thoughts on bringing back the character?**

I'm really trying to preserve some mystery with him, which works to counter more out-in-front heroes like Flash. I think a lot of people assume you can't do these characters except as period pieces, which of course you can, but I want to show that they work great in a modern context without having to change what they are. The quality of 'classic' means it can work at any point.

**All three of the principal cast - Flash Gordon, Mandrake, and The Phantom - have a long and storied career in popular media. In fact, some historians would consider Mandrake to be the first superhero. Has history/cultural (or pop cultural) significance played a role in how you handle the characters?**

Oh yes. I put Alex Raymond and Flash Gordon way up at the top in my hierarchy of adventure comics history—so much of what came later was established by Flash Gordon, and Raymond was a looming art hero, as was Al Williamson who later did some of the greatest Flash stories. As a kid I was able, like many, to read The Phantom in my daily newspaper, and for a while I'd cut them out and save them. I wasn't able to read Mandrake until later, my only sense of him was

Kurtzman and Elder's parody Manduck The Magician in the old Mad Magazine reprints!

How impressive is it that Lee Falk kept writing the Phantom for the rest of the 20th Century? In short, the history of those characters and their creators looms large in my mental landscape and the chance to introduce them to new readers is one I couldn't pass up.

**Heroes are often defined by the villains they face. What can you tell us about the perils that our heroes face in KINGS WATCH?**

Since Mandrake was the first, it seemed appropriate to lead with his biggest enemy, The Cobra. In our story, The Cobra has found a source of power that will benefit him greatly, but put the entire planet in deep peril. He essentially opens Pandora's Box and our three heroes have to rise to a new level of challenge for all of them.

**You're no stranger to team books, especially those with an off-beat line-up of very unique personalities. Are there parallels from your previous work in AGENTS OF ATLAS and X-MEN: FIRST CLASS that fans will see in your new KINGS WATCH project?**

I think especially if you liked Agents of Atlas you're going to enjoy this. That was all about approaching archetypes, and KW is too. I try to hit a balance of menace, thrill, and humor that I love about adventure fiction. And there are spies, pirates, and monsters.

**Among the cast of KINGS WATCH - is there a particular character you have the most fun writing, and why?**

I'm partial to Flash because we're presenting him as such an upbeat guy, but really they're all a thrill. The Phantom as a grizzled older hero who's seen everything is pretty appealing, after all.

**How much previous knowledge of the characters would readers need to know before picking up KINGS WATCH?**

Nothing at all. If you're familiar with the characters you'll pick up on the history we're using, but there isn't anything to wiki-study before jumping in.

**Are there any popular comparison titles on the market right now whose fans would best fit the KINGS WATCH audience?**

Rocketeer, Shadow, B.P.R.D., anything I've worked on. I think you'll find it has universal appeal to the audiences who like Indiana Jones and Star Wars, franchises that were influenced by these features originally.



# CODENAME **ACTION**

IN THE HEIGHT OF THE  
COLD WAR, SPIES AND  
MASKED HEROES ALIKE  
ARE DRAWN INTO A DEADLY  
PLOT ON BOTH SIDES OF  
THE IRON CURTAIN...



WRITTEN BY  
**CHRIS ROBERSON**  
(MASKS)

ART BY  
**JONATHAN LAU**  
(KEVIN SMITH'S GREEN HORNET)

COVERS BY  
**JAE LEE**  
**FRANCESCO FRANCAVILLA**  
**JONATHAN LAU**  
**JOHNNY DESJARDINS**

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# WHAT IS CODENAME: ACTION?

An interview with writer Chris Roberson

**CODENAME: ACTION** will emulate the very successful concept of **MASKS** by uniting a diverse and recognizable cast of solo adventurers. How would you compare the two projects?

The new series is not a direct sequel, but a new story set some years later that features a few of the same cast members. And while **MASKS** was an attempt to showcase everything I love best about the Pulp / Golden Age / Old Time Radio stories of the Great Depression era, **CODENAME: ACTION** is intended to showcase the things that I love about jet-age superspies and Cold War-era super-heroics.

With "**ACTION**" in the title, we know that **Captain Action** will be central to the story. What can you share with us about his involvement in this universe of characters?

**CODENAME: ACTION** in part functions as an origin story for Captain Action, reintroducing him to a modern audience while at the same time setting him firmly in the period in which the character first appeared. Captain Action was a product of the time that gave us the James Bond films, and TV shows like *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and *The Prisoner*, and **CODENAME: ACTION** is very much an attempt to put the character in that kind of context.

Who are the new players in the **CODENAME: ACTION** universe, and what would you describe as the unique traits that each of these characters brings to the story?

**CODENAME: ACTION** isn't a superhero story, but is a superspy adventure with some superheroes in it. So the main focus of the attention is on the spy and espionage characters like **Operator 5**, **Black Venus**, and **Operative 1001** (the man who will become Captain Action). Along the way, our spies will encounter various masked heroes and vigilantes, like **American Crusader**, **Green Hornet** and **Kato**, and **The Spider**.

How would you describe the accessibility of **CODENAME: ACTION**? Will readers need to have a previous knowledge of the characters, or of the **MASKS** series?

The intent is that anyone should be able to pick up **CODENAME: ACTION** without any prior knowledge of these characters. Everything that readers need to know should be on the page.

What are the themes that you wish to explore in **CODENAME: ACTION**?

When developing **MASKS**, I gave a lot of thought to the thematic underpinnings of the story we were telling, getting at the essential ideas of "justice" and the "law" that these various masked vigilantes operated under. With **CODENAME: ACTION**, my focus is more on the adventure aspects of the story. So I suppose you could say that the themes I'm hoping to explore in **CODENAME: ACTION** are explosions, chase scenes, and high-flying spy action!

Behind the scenes, how would you describe the project development? Are there unique challenges or benefits to working with such a vast array of characters and licenses?

**MASKS** was an interesting challenge, since we had so many different characters that each operated with equal footing, and each demanded a fair amount of "screen time." Since the focus of **CODENAME: ACTION** is more on the espionage and spy characters, it's actually been more of an organic process, simply waiting to find the best places to use the various other characters in supporting or "guest star" roles.

Whom do you see as the target audience for **CODENAME: ACTION**?

I hope that anyone who enjoys spy adventure stories in comics, TV, novels, or movies would find something to like about **CODENAME: ACTION**!

